SUBLEC INTERNATIONAL
WORKSHOP/SEMINAR/COLLOQUIUM

A SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR REVEALING SOCIAL AND
FISCAL FRAUD

BRUSSELS, FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE SOCIAL
SECURITY, 25 FEBRUAR 2008

Organised by
Federal Administration Social Security
Science Policy
the Higher Institute for Labour Studies (HIVA) of the Catholic University of
Leuven
CREPP Centre de Recherche en Economie Publique et de la Population University of
Liège
Centre de sociologie du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la formation, University of Brussels
AIM OF THE CONFERENCE

In 2008 and 2009 the Federal Public Service Social Security and the Belgian Science Policy will organize a large scale survey on social and fiscal fraud or the so called underground economy. Large definitions of fraud will be used, covering as well undeclared work as other undeclared income. The direct methodology of asking the citizen, worker or consumer its demand and supply of undeclared work and income, is one of the methodologies to estimate size and profile of this phenomena. It could be oriented to the total population, or the active population, or oriented to certain risk categories. Surveys could be oriented also to the firms, small or larger, independent workers, free professions. It can include only the issue of undeclared work, or the use and misuse of social benefits, the non declaration of other income, for instance capital income. Fiscal pressure, red tape, control and law enforcement, tax morale, those are often mentioned as the determinants of social and fiscal fraud, and could be questioned. How to include in the sample special risk groups. What can be learned form surveys with benefit users and the possible social fraud? How to formulate the questionnaire and what design is appropriate. And what are the potential results? The response? The usefulness for research. The relevance for statistical, policy and control matters. It is the last years also promoted by the European Commission as one of the promising methods. But revealing the covered and reporting on socially less or not accepted activities is methodologically difficult. The Eurobarometer recently organized on this issue demonstrated promising but also disappointing results. To scan the new methodological possibilities about sample, questionnaire and roll out, its mode, all will be discussed with the ambition to learn form recent experience in organizing and analyzing those results is the aim of this seminar. The conclusion of the seminar will be used as an input for the further organising the survey in Belgium. The Belgian survey will probably be focused on the general population and independent workers. For that reason experience from population surveys and business surveys will be combined. The research team, international experts will be confronted with an audience national experts in survey research in Belgium and at European level from statistical offices and universities, and also with the experts of the controlling authorities. For each paper a discussant will be invited.
PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME (WORKING LANGUAGE ENGLISH)

Morning Session

Chairman of the morning session:
Jozef Pacolet (Hoger instituut voor de arbeid, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)

08.30 Welcome and coffee

Part I Welcome

09.00 Welcome : Tom Auwers / Koen Vleminckx: Federal Public Service Social Security and Aziz Naji: Science Policy

09.10 Didier Verbeke, Federal Public Service Social Security, Ambition of SUBLEC

Part II Population oriented surveys

9.20 Friedrich Schneider, Recent experience in the use of surveys measuring and understanding the underground economy

10.00 Overview of surveys on social and fiscal fraud and its relevance for statistical and control issues: Jozef Pacolet and Sigrid Merckx, Hoger instituut voor de arbeid, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

10.30 Belgian experience with direct surveys and questions for the new survey: Sergio Perelman and Pierre Pestieau, CREPP Centre de Recherche en Economie Publique et de la Population University

11.00 How to include groups at risk: clandestine workers, illegal migration, in the sample and how to reach them, E. Krzesio, Centre de sociologie du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la formation, University of Brussels

11.30 Coffee

11.45 Debate
12.00 The Experience of the Rockwool Foundation and its relevance for the fiscal administration. Søren Pedersen, Ministry of Taxation and before Rockwool

Part III Some conclusions to go forward in Belgium with the SUBLEC-survey

12.30 Didier Verbeke, Jozef Pacolet, Sergio Perelman and Estelle Krzeslo
13.00 Debate

13.15 Lunch

Afternoon session

Chairman of the afternoon session:
Sergio Perelman, CREPP Centre de Recherche en Economie Publique et de la Population University

14.00 Lessons from the Eurobarometer 2007: Arnold Riedmann, Research Manager TNS Infratest Sozialforschung

14.30 Lessons from the Eurobarometer 2007: Sergio Perelman. Some additional analysis for Belgium

15.00 Lessons from the Eurobarometer 2007: relevance for Europe, Guido Vanderseypen, European Commission (tinvited)

15.30 Debate

15.45 Coffee

Part III Firms oriented surveys

16.00 Use of business surveys in detecting fraud: Jan Hanousek, CERGE-EI, Charles University, Prague

16.30 Feasibility of surveys in construction in Belgium: Jozef Pacolet, Hoger instituut voor de arbeid, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

17.0 Debate